In Elizabethan society, the man of the household was the leading, dominant figure whom makes all the decisions. It was a patriarchal society where the father had complete control over all women in his family, his wife, daughter and mother. In this patriarchal society, the dominant power of Lord Capulet changes the dynamic of his relationship with Juliet. Although a caring father, Capulet’s self-esteem is hurt when Juliet refuses his request for her to marry Paris. Being the dominant power in his house, his injured self-esteem causes the question of marrying Paris to transform into a command, thereby causing his relationship with Juliet to change from apparent equality to dominance.

In the beginning of the tragedy Romeo & Juliet, Juliet is a 13-year-old girl, obedient to her father and honoring his decisions. Her relationship to her father was based on apparent equality. She is supposed to marry Paris, which she refers to as “an honor” (1.3.71). However, when she meets Romeo at a party, they are head over heels in love with each other and are soon married. Throughout the play, she does not inform her parents of her marriage to Romeo, and when she has to marry Paris in 3.5, she goes against family and father. In Elizabethan times, disobedience was unthought of, but Juliet goes against him and refuses to marry Paris. Her character changes rapidly from being well mannered and obedient to brave and stubborn. Passion and love for Romeo changes her and makes her more reckless and impetuous. Though she has a strong will and insists on it, she is still respectful to her father: “Not proud you have, but thankful that you have./ Proud can I never be of what I hate,/ but thankful even for hate that is meant love” (3.5.151-153). This change in character causes her to oppose her father and instigates a shift in their relationship.

In Act 1, Capulet is magnanimous towards his daughter, Juliet. When Paris requests to marry Juliet and wishes her to have his child as soon as possible, Capulet responds, “My will to her consent is but a part” (1.2.17). Although it was common in Elizabethan times for marriage to be arranged by the head of the family, Capulet gives his daughter a choice in her marriage. However, in Act 3, Capulet assumes Juliet is mourning Tybalt’s death, and hopes Juliet to be joyful once again. Thus he urges Juliet to marry Paris, demonstrating his love for her. Capulet is the quintessential Elizabethan patriarch. He is dominant over everyone in his household. When Capulet arranges Juliet’s marriage with Paris, Capulet assures Paris, “I think she will be ruled in all my respects by me” (3.4.14-15). However, when Juliet defies him, his ego is injured and he threatens to disown her: “Graze where you will, you shall not house with me” (3.5.200). Capulet is a tender father of Juliet, but also a resolute patriarch, resulting in conflict between the two.

In Act 3, Scene 5, the audience gains more insight into the personalities of Juliet and her father. As a result of these new developments in the personalities, conflict arises, causing a change in the dynamic of their relationship. In Act 1, Juliet’s submissiveness allows her to interact with her father in a seemingly equal manner, as her father refuses to consent to a marriage between Paris and his daughter without her agreement. Her father appears to respect her opinion because he understands that Juliet will consent to his decisions, as this was the norm in Elizabethan society. However, Juliet’s newfound passion for Romeo has caused her to become recalcitrant and directly defy her father, and she says, “I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam,/I will not marry yet” (3.5.125-126). Angered by her disobedience, her father orders her to marry Paris, and a shift in their relationship is evident to the audience. Her father is a dominant figure, issuing commands to his daughter, saying, “I tell thee what: get thee to church o’ Thursday,/Or never after look me in the face” (3.5.167-16). Lord Capulet’s ego and Juliet’s reckless love for Romeo conflict, allowing the audience to see the reality behind their relationship as being more controlled by her father.

Capulet’s intentions are to benefit Juliet, yet his self-centeredness causes a negative transformation in their relationship. Traveling from a loving, seemingly equal relationship, Capulet’s dominance and Juliet’s disagreements caused a change in the characteristics of their relationship. Capulet’s male ego is bruised, and Juliet’s love for Romeo triggers her self-opinion to change from obedience into an opposing factor to Capulet. Both will not listen to each other with patience; both act with dramatic reactions to each other; nor will either try to understand their different perspectives destroying a once balanced relationship.